

Executive Registry

7 November 1958

10-8873

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Consequences of a Move by the Sudanese Prime  
Minister to Assume Authoritarian Power

## Conclusion

We believe that if Prime Minister Khalil were to seize power in the Sudan he could probably arrest the drift towards political chaos. Against the growing opposition, however, he might not last for more than a year or two.

1. On 17 November with the opening of the Sudanese Parliament Prime Minister Khalil will probably again confront a divided and unstable legislature which has for some time obstructed his attempts to make a constructive approach to the Sudan's many problems. Khalil's own cabinet, a coalition of Umma and Peoples Democratic Party elements, has been and is likely to be only slightly more constructive and consistent in its support of the Prime Minister's programs.

2. There is at least an even chance that Prime Minister Khalil will refuse to accept a continuation of this frustrating situation which he believes is leading to chaos. He may dissolve Parliament when it reconvenes and attempt to rule directly with Army backing. Alternatively, he might seek to set up some kind of "national government" made up of picked representatives of the several parties, again supported by the military.


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3. We have little basis for judging Khalil's prospects for success in implementing either course. Reports of his intentions have begun to circulate and his opponents are unlikely to be caught by surprise. Certain urban groups which support the NUP would almost certainly demonstrate against a takeover by Khalil and the Egyptian clandestine network is probably already at work preparing and supporting countermoves by the opposition. On the other hand Khalil's popularity was demonstrated in his strong showing at the polls last February and he enjoys the support of the Ansar, the larger and more powerful of the Sudan's two important religious sects.

4. The key element would be the small Sudanese Army, which Khalil once led as Chief of Staff. Some young officers probably sympathize with the NUP, but Khalil appears to believe that the Army would support him. Given such support, we believe that his chances would be better than even for a successful assumption of full powers.

5. If Khalil were to succeed in establishing his authority he could probably make a relatively orderly approach to the solution of the Sudan's pressing problems, but he could not under the most favorable circumstances expect to find ready solutions for the Sudan's basic problems. His efforts will be hampered by the country's dependence upon a single cash crop, its lack of natural resources for economic development, and by the division between the North and the South. If Khalil were to seize control, he could probably arrest the Sudan's drift toward political chaos.

6. If Khalil seized power in the Sudan it would be assumed in Egypt that he had done so with US advice and support and that this move, like Bourguiba's challenge to Nasser in the Arab League Council, was part of a deliberate attempt to encircle Egypt. It would also be assumed that Khalil had Western support for an attempt to use the Sudan's position on the Nile as a means of harrassing Egypt. Egypt would probably step-up its subversive activities in the Sudan, utilizing the opportunity to condemn Khalil as an



American stooge. Khalil on his part would be forced to look to the West for economic and military support if he were long to survive. Such a posture on his part would further alienate the growing urban elements, represented by the nationalist and neutralist NUP. Against their growing opposition Khalil might not last for more than a year or two.

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